

universities have contributed. Each writes with first-hand knowledge of his particular subject, and the completed volume is one which bears testimony to the high standards obtaining in Scottish medicine.

It is a great pity that the medical student with his over-burdened curriculum will scarcely have time to peruse these pages. Certainly it should be in the surgery of every general practitioner, where it will serve as an ever-ready source of knowledge in time of need.

**TUBERCULOSIS AND NATIONAL HEALTH.** By H. H. Thomson, M.D., D.P.H. 1939. London: Methuen & Co. Pp. 244. 10s. 6d. net.

This book was written with the idea of clarifying the present-day views on the epidemiological and sociological aspects of tuberculosis. Dr. H. Hyslop Thomson has spent his whole medical career in the study of this disease, and his views as now expressed in this book will therefore be exceedingly useful and interesting to the medical profession.

In speaking of incidence and significance of tuberculosis he states that the notification-rate and death-rate have both been steadily decreasing, giving the actual figures from 1933 onwards. It is also interesting to note that the proportion of deaths to notifications is also falling, i.e., 1 in 1.9 in 1933 to 1 in 2.1 in 1937. This shows that with the improvements in treatment and the facilities for such, together with present-day preventative methods, there are hopes that this once-dreaded disease will be one day among the minor problems in medicine. Dr. Thomson goes on to speak of different types of the disease, and of the etiology, discussing parental transmission, impaired resistance, influence of associated disease, and the relation of mental and physical strain. He also lays out in detail the questions of milk supply and diagnosis of tuberculosis in cattle.

The more important aspect, modern treatment and its aims and prevention, are extremely fully gone into, and in a manner which leaves no room for criticism. The book ends with a list of the author's conclusions, and on perusing them one is made to feel that there is still a great amount of work to be done. In his own words: "The sociological aspects of tuberculosis present a problem which can only be successfully solved with state aid and co-operation."

**TREATMENT OF SOME COMMON DISEASES (MEDICAL AND SURGICAL).**

By T. Rowland Hill, M.D., M.R.C.P.(Lond.). 1939. Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone. Pp. 398. 15s. net.

Dr. Rowland Hill is to be congratulated on the idea of compiling a book which is, in the true sense, not a textbook, but rather a series of monographs on the treatment of diseases which commonly form the problems of the general practitioner. In so doing he has been able to eliminate many subjects which, though essential in a book of reference, prove an encumbrance to the majority of medical textbooks, and has used the space so gained in a much more valuable manner.

The book is written by various authors from London hospitals, amongst whom are many well-known medical and surgical names and most of whom have reached the top in their particular branch of the profession. The book is written in a clear and easy style and is moreover well illustrated by both figures and X-ray plates. On the medical side various cardio-vascular and lung diseases are fully dealt with. A long article on digestive disorders in children follows. But to me the most interesting was that on anæmia, the classification and completeness of treatment leaving a marked impression. Another chapter on prophylactic treatment by active immunisation begins with a photograph of a tombstone inscribed thus:—"To the memory of Benjm. Jesty (of Downshay), who departed this life April 16th, 1816, aged 79 years." "He was born at Yetminster in this county, and was an upright, honest man: particularly noted for having been the first person (known) that introduced the cowpox by inoculation, and who from his great strength of mind made the experiment from the (cow) on his wife and two sons in the year 1774." The author discusses fully the value of

active immunisation in a large number of diseases, and gives details of the actual technique, etc.

Of surgical problems, enlargement of the prostate, malignant disease, various infections, and head injuries are dealt with in an up-to-date manner. There are also monographs on various skin, obstetric, ear, nose and throat, dental and anæsthesia problems. I can confidently recommend this book to the medical profession and to the general practitioner in particular.

**RECTAL SURGERY.** By W. Ernest Miles, F.R.C.S.Eng. London: Cassell & Co. Ltd. 1939. Pp. 359. Figs. 105. 17/6 net.

THIS book is a personal interpretation of the various problems presented to the author by rectal disease, and the methods of treatment which he has found most efficacious. It is most important that a surgeon of Mr. Miles's standard and experience should at this stage of his career put pen to paper and give those coming after him the full value of the scope of his work. It is a pity, however, that he ignores the views of other authorities on this subject. Admittedly it is a "personal interpretation," but the book is nevertheless titled "rectal surgery," and as such should be comprehensive. For instance, dealing with surgical anatomy, he merely mentions the work of Milligan and Morgan in a few lines, a work which has been hailed by rectal surgeons, both here and in America, as the most important advance in this subject in recent years. Again, with regard to the "Pecten band," which he features largely in minor rectal surgery, it is hard for one to realize quite how a rounded band of fibrous tissue, presumably inflammatory in origin, should completely encircle the anus lying free in submucosa, with no attachments to mucosa or deeper structure. Is it not much more likely that "the band" is the result of a fibrosis of some pre-existing structure? That structure has been proved by Milligan and Morgan to be the subcutaneous external sphincter.

With regard to the treatment of ano-rectal abscess, it is not the general opinion that one should leave limited offshoots alone, as this is one way of inviting the subsequent development of a fistula. Again, his description of the lymphatic spread of cancer of the rectum, which he states has not changed since his address to the B.M.A. in July, 1910, does not correspond with the views of Cuthbert Dukes, who is looked upon as the authority on this subject. Mr. Miles still holds that downward and lateral lymphatic spread of cancer are important, whereas in St. Mark's it has been shown, from the microscopic study of a very large number of operative specimens, that downward and lateral spread only occur when the upward lymphatic channels have become completely blocked by carcinoma cells, and this is only long after the condition has become inoperable. It is, however, a most valuable book, written by one of the pioneers of rectal surgery.